

# The (All-Important) Interview



## A Little Research Before the Interview can Really Pay Off

If you really want that job, you need to know as much as possible about the company when you walk into the interview. The research you do will help you make the best possible impression and enable you to make the best decision about the position. Where can you get information about the company? One quick and easy way is by visiting the company's website. Most companies have an 'about us' section where they tell the company's history, may list management personnel, post press releases about the company and so on. **Try to mention during the interview that you have visited their website. It shows your initiative and that you know how to navigate the Internet.**

A list of virtually every employer in Utah:  
<http://firmfind.dws.state.ut.us/pgMain.asp>

A good way to see the financial status overall of a company is to get a copy of their Annual Report. It should provide fairly detailed information on the company's financial health, their plans and background.

Another research tool is public records. Public or college libraries will be able to point you to documents such as trade journals that may have information about the company. If you know anyone working in the company, ask them if they like their job, the company and why or why not. Ask about the working environment and the company culture: Formal/informal, casual/structured, fair and equitable or an old-boy network that plays favorites, etc. Try to get them to be specific, and find out all you can from them.

The more you know about the company when you walk into the interview, the better you can negotiate for salary, make a wise employment decision and impress your potential employer with your knowledge and skills tailored to that specific firm.

## Effective Interviewing

*Excerpted from "Interview Techniques That Work" by Peter Newfield, President of Career Resumes.*

Arrive on time, if not a few minutes early, for your interview. If you show up to a job interview late, ill prepared, or dressed inappropriately, you could be sealing your own fate. It may sound old fashioned, but a neat, professional appearance is always apropos for a job interview. Walk tall, smile, make eye contact, and present a firm handshake—this goes for men and women. Bring at least two flat copies of your resume to the interview. Rehearse with a friend, relative, or co-worker before the interview to sharpen your communication skills.

Answer questions clearly and concisely. Don't get long winded or meander into personal details that are just not appropriate to discuss. Try to keep the interview on target and focused on you. Be prepared to sell yourself in person by highlighting your strengths, your accomplishments on your present or previous jobs, and your eagerness to work for this potential employer. No need to apologize for anything, just accentuate the positive, relevant information instead.

You want the employer to focus on your skills, not your appearance!



Display an attitude of "humble egotism". Psyche yourself up into creating the impression that "I'm great, I know I'm great, but I know I have more to learn" and "I want this job more than anything else in the world and if I don't get a job offer, I'm just going to lie down and die". Show your enthusiasm, dedication, and ambition through your words and body language. If you come in with an attitude of "show me why I should work for this company" and halfway through the interview you think you might want to, it's too late. The most important goal of the job interview is to get a job offer. You can always think it over and turn it down later, but the name of the game is to get that job offer above all other candidates!

Try not to fidget in your chair, pick at your cuticles, hum, chew gum, tap your foot or do anything else that might give the impression that you are a nervous, neurotic mess. If the interviewer asks an open-ended question, "How do you feel about status reports?" try to narrow down the focus by asking a more specific question in return, "Would you like to know how I handle deadlines and maintain an organized data base"? An interview is not the appropriate place to haggle over money -- it's best to conduct salary negotiations only when you actually get the job offer as well as ask questions about benefits, personal days, or vacation time.

When the job interview is concluded, stand up and extend your hand, and thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration of you as a qualified candidate for this position. Leave gracefully -- you may ask when the decision is anticipated but don't offer to call back or give your cell phone and pager numbers -- just walk out as confidently as you entered.

## Questions to Ask



Usually near the end of a job interview you will be asked if you have any questions. Many job seekers make the mistake of asking questions about their own needs and wants. Do not make this mistake! **Your questions should be work-focused, task-focused, or function-focused—not about what you want to receive from the company.** Instead, ask about the position's duties, challenges and typical assignments; what outcomes would be expected of you; how the job fits into the company. Here are some examples:

### Good Questions

What would my primary responsibilities be?  
Who would I be reporting to?  
What type of training would I receive?

### Bad Questions

How much vacation time do I get?  
Is there sick leave, holiday pay?  
Do I get an expense account?

**Save questions about what you'll get until after they've made you a firm job offer.**

# How Will You Answer the Big Question?



The Big Question is “Why do you want this job?” If you answer “Because I need a job real bad”, or something similar, you might as well be wearing a giant L on your forehead—for Loser. You’re not going to get that job.

Why? Because the employer is really asking, “What can you do for us?”, not “What can we do for you?” This is not a time to talk about what you want. It’s a time to talk about your accomplishments and what sets you apart from the rest of the applicants for the job. You’re giving a sales pitch, and the product you’re selling is you. If you’re going to make the sale you have to have a good answer to the Big Question.

Start preparing to answer this question ahead of time by looking again at the job description. What do you have to be, do and know to perform that job? Make a list of the job requirements and the skills they would include.

Now determine what you can offer to fit those requirements. List the skills you have that are needed to do the job. It’s OK to include personal traits that make you unique: Your personality type, people skills and enthusiasm will all be important.

Remember, you are unique. No two people are exactly alike, so think about what sets you apart from others. Are you always on time? Can you get along with others well? Do you work well under pressure? Are you good at paying attention to detail? Do you enjoy making order out of chaos? Do you have a good sense of humor? Be honest, but generous with yourself and think about what the employer would want from the person doing that particular job.

When you’ve made an exhaustive list, circle the two or three key qualities you have that match what the employer is looking for. Use those key qualities to come up with a one-minute statement that sums up what you can offer. Emphasize the things that make you unique and a good match for the job.

By making the effort to prepare for the Big Question, you can come up with a sales pitch for yourself that helps you stand out from the crowd of applicants, and get that job.

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For more information on interviewing:

<http://jobseeker.dws.state.ut.us/guides/Interview.asp>

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20045.htm>

<http://www.asktheinterviewcoach.com/>

<http://www.collegegrad.com/intv/index.shtml>

<http://www.joblink-usa.com/interview.htm>

<http://www.collegerecruiter.com/pages/articles/article35.htm>

<http://www.job-interview.net/>

<http://content.monster.com/jobinfo/interview/>

<http://www.pse-net.com/interview/interview.htm>